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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 002354

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SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR DISCUSSES SECURITY, SERVICES, AND KIRKUK WITH PRIME MINISTER MALIKI

Classified By: Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶11. (S) SUMMARY: In a brief meeting with Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki on June 29, the Ambassador raised points on security and economic issues, ranging from a military operation in Fallujah to the draft investment law. The Ambassador also discussed the Kurds, and he indicated to Maliki that the Embassy is ready to use its influence with the Kurdish leadership to broker an agreement on Kirkuk and a hydrocarbon law which contributes to Iraq's unity. Maliki told the Ambassador he is creating a commission on Kirkuk, which will include a cross-section of senior Iraqi politicians. Finally, Maliki agreed to delay his trip to Washington until July 25-26 and to address a joint session of Congress. END SUMMARY.

Security Issues Paramount

¶12. (C) In a brief meeting with Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki on June 29, the Ambassador raised several issues, mainly in regards to the security situation:

-- ANBAR: The Ambassador thanked Maliki for his information on the illegal checkpoints that had been set up in Fallujah. The information was confirmed, and troops were being sent into the area on June 29. Maliki noted that he had met on June 29 with the Governor of Anbar and promised to support him.

-- IRAQI ARMY/IRAQI POLICE: Maliki noted that he is concerned about the size and capability of the Iraqi Army, and the state of its equipment. Maliki and the Ambassador had agreed to form a committee to work on increasing the capability of the Iraqi Army and Iraqi Police forces; the Ambassador noted that he had submitted his nominees for the committee already. Maliki said he would ask the relevant ministers to nominate three or four names for a committee to deal with these issues but suggested that the committee also include two Army representatives and one from the Ministry of Interior.

-- CONTACT ON INSURGENCY: The Ambassador requested a point of contact in the Prime Minister's office through which the Embassy could convey information on the insurgency to him. Maliki suggested that a committee, with the Minister of State for National Dialogue Akram al-Hakim, liaise with the Embassy.

-- KIDNAPPING: The Ambassador informed Maliki that a young Iraqi national working for the Embassy's public affairs office had been kidnapped on June 28 in Sadr City. The Ambassador stated his concern for the victim and requested assistance from the Iraqi Government to secure his safe return. Maliki expressed his sympathy and promised to have his office look into the matter immediately.

Economy and Services

¶3. (C) The Ambassador also raised some points on developing the economy:

-- OIL: The Ambassador informed Maliki that the oil issue needs to be resolved in a way that contributes to Iraqi unity. Ambassador said that Oil Minister Husayn al-Shahristani had told him recently that the Kurds are the primary stumbling block on this and that he had responded that he would raise this issue with the Kurdish leadership. Maliki agreed that the central government should have control over oil resources. He noted that large oil companies would only negotiate with the central government, since Baghdad could guarantee that the contracts would be honored.

-- ECONOMIC PROJECTS: The US is willing to help with the planning for economic projects, the Ambassador told Maliki. Maliki thanked the Ambassador for this support and asked whether the US had seen the draft investment law. Maliki promised to send a copy to the Ambassador for review and noted that both former Finance Minister Ali Allawi and Iraqiyya parliamentarian Madhi Hafedh had made some changes but approve of the plan overall.

The Kurds and Kirkuk

¶4. (C) The Ambassador noted that the Kurds have been pushing non-Kurds to leave Kirkuk, especially Iraqi Arabs. He said that this is unacceptable to the US and the Embassy is ready

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to use its influence with Barzani and Talabani on the issues of Kirkuk and oil resources. The Ambassador added that he was planning to go to Erbil on June 29 and would raise these issues with Barzani.

¶5. (C) Maliki responded that he also will speak with Barzani about several issues in the North: the Kurds appointing people for provincial government posts in Mosul; fighting between Arabs and Kurds in Nineva and Kirkuk; and the KRG's opening of a Ministry of Municipalities in Kirkuk. (NOTE: Maliki is planning to travel to the Kurdistan Region on July ¶10. END NOTE) In addition, he said, Baghdad and the Kurds need an agreement to regulate the number of weapons needed for the Kurdish regional guards.

¶6. (C) Maliki also stated that he is pleased to hear the US will be weighing in with the Kurds on Kirkuk. Maliki reported that Turkmen and Arabs are not being treated fairly in Kirkuk. This is embarrassing to Maliki, since citizens in Mosul, Tall'Afar, and Kirkuk have appealed to Baghdad for protection. The civil war would begin in Kirkuk, Maliki warned the Ambassador. The Arabs would support the Kurds in Mosul, while Turkey would help the Turkmen. As soon as Turkey moves, the Iranians would insist on being involved as well. Maliki stated that Kirkuk could be a separate province but suggested that his Commission on Kirkuk take the lead on finding a solution to the issue. Some possible leaders in the Commission include Muhsin Abd al-Hamid, Fakri Karim, Nasir , Hajim al-Hassani, and Tawfiq al-Yasseri.

Maliki Comes to Washington

¶7. (S) The Ambassador relayed to Maliki a request from President Bush that Maliki delay his planned trip to Washington until July 25-26, when Maliki could address a joint session of Congress. Maliki agreed to delay his trip and said he looks forward to speaking to Congress.

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